

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (currently amended) A computer based method for acquiring life history information from an applicant for employment to minimize positive response bias and enhance the veracity of the acquired life history information, comprised of:

presenting to the applicant a collection of questions related to life history information, the

life history information comprising information about more than one life event,

the question collection being comprised of a revealed stem question relating to a

first life event and ~~at least one~~ a hidden branch question relating to a second life

event, the hidden branch question being unrelated to the revealed stem question;

receiving from the applicant a response to the revealed stem question and storing the

revealed stem question response in a computer database;

based on the revealed stem question response, automatically determining whether to

present the ~~at least one~~ hidden branch question to the applicant;

if the ~~at least one~~ hidden branch question is to be presented to the applicant, revealing the

hidden branch question to the applicant, receiving from the applicant a response

to the hidden branch question and storing the hidden branch question response in

the computer database; and

~~wherein the response to the stem question and the response to the hidden branch question~~

~~are relevant to predicting a predefined negative outcome for the applicant~~

determining a critical item, wherein the critical item is determined by combining

information contained in the responses to both the revealed stem question and the hidden branch question, and wherein the critical item has been empirically related to a predefined negative outcome.

2. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the applicant is an applicant for a law enforcement, criminal justice or public safety employment.

3 – 5. (canceled)

6. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the predefined negative outcome is an objective outcome.

7. (original) The method of claim 6, wherein the predefined objective, negative outcome is failure to complete training.

8. (original) The method of claim 6, wherein the predefined objective, negative outcome is receipt of a predefined disciplinary action.

9. (original) The method of claim 6, wherein the predefined objective, negative outcome is notification of a performance deficiency.

10. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the responses to the ~~at least one~~ revealed stem question and the hidden branch question [is] are comprised of descriptive

information.

11-13. (cancelled)

14. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the revealed stem question response cannot be altered by the applicant after ~~completion of the question collection~~ the revealed stem question response is received from the applicant.

15. (currently amended) A computer readable medium comprising software for acquiring life history information from an applicant for employment to minimize positive response bias and enhance the veracity of the acquired life history information, wherein the software instructs a computer to:

present to the applicant a collection of questions related to life history information, the life history information comprising information about more than one life event, the question collection being comprised of a revealed stem question relating to a first life event and ~~at least one~~ a hidden branch question relating to a second life event, the hidden branch question being unrelated to the revealed stem question;

receive from the applicant a response to the revealed stem question and storing the

revealed stem question response in a computer database;

based on the revealed stem question response, automatically determine whether to present

the ~~at least one~~ hidden branch question to the applicant;

if the ~~at least one~~ hidden branch question is to be presented to the applicant, reveal the

hidden branch question to the applicant, ~~receiving~~ receive from the applicant a

response to the hidden branch question and ~~storing~~ store the hidden branch  
question response in the computer database; and  
~~wherein the response to the stem question and the response to the hidden branch question~~  
~~are relevant to predicting a predefined negative outcome for the applicant~~  
determine a critical item, wherein the critical item is determined by combining  
information contained in the responses to both the revealed stem question and the  
hidden branch question, and wherein the critical item has been empirically related  
to a predefined negative outcome.

16-24. (canceled)

25. (previously presented) The computer readable medium of claim 15, wherein the applicant is an applicant for law enforcement, criminal justice or public safety employment.

26. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium method of claim 15, wherein the predefined outcome is an objective outcome.

27. (previously presented) The computer readable medium of claim 15, wherein the predefined outcome is a negative outcome.

28. (previously presented) The computer readable medium of claim 15, wherein the predefined negative outcome is an objective outcome.

29. (previously presented) The computer readable medium of claim 28, wherein the predefined objective, negative outcome is the applicant's failure to complete training.

30. (previously presented) The computer readable medium of claim 28, wherein the predefined objective, negative outcome is the applicant's receipt of a predefined disciplinary action.

31. (previously presented) The computer readable medium of claim 28, wherein the predefined objective, negative outcome is notification of a performance deficiency.

32 – 46. (canceled)

47. (currently amended) The computer readable medium of claim 15, wherein the responses to the ~~at least one~~ revealed stem question and the hidden branch question [is] are comprised of descriptive information.

48-50. (cancelled)

51. (currently amended) The computer readable medium of claim 15, wherein the revealed stem question response cannot be altered by the applicant after ~~completion of the question collection~~ the revealed stem question response is received from the applicant.

52. (currently amended) A computer-based system for acquiring life history

information from an applicant for employment to minimize positive response bias and enhance the veracity of the acquired life history information, comprising:

a user interface for:

presenting to the applicant a collection of questions related to life history information,

the life history information comprising information about more than one life

event, the question collection being comprised of a revealed stem question

relating to a first life event and ~~at least one~~ a hidden branch question relating to a

second life event, the hidden branch question being unrelated to the revealed stem

question;

receiving from the applicant a response to the revealed stem question and storing

the revealed stem question response in a computer database;

a computer processor that:

automatically determines whether to present the ~~at least one~~ hidden branch

question to the applicant based on the revealed stem question response;

if the ~~at least one~~ hidden branch question is to be presented to the applicant,

reveals the hidden branch question to the applicant, ~~receiving~~ receives from the

applicant a response to the hidden branch question and ~~storing~~ stores the hidden

branch question response in the computer database;

~~and wherein the response to the stem question and the response to the hidden~~

~~branch question are relevant to predicting a predefined negative outcome for the~~

~~applicant~~

determines a critical item, wherein the critical item is determined by combining

information contained in the responses to both the revealed stem question and the

hidden branch question, and wherein the critical item has been empirically related  
to a predefined negative outcome.

53. (cancelled)

54. (previously presented) The computer-based system of claim 52, wherein the applicant is an applicant for law enforcement, criminal justice or public safety employment.

55. (previously presented) The computer-based system of claim 52, wherein the predefined outcome is an objective outcome.

56. (previously presented) The computer-based system of claim 52, wherein the predefined outcome is a negative outcome.

57. (previously presented) The computer-based system of claim 56, wherein the predefined negative outcome is an objective outcome.

58. (previously presented) The computer-based system of claim 57, wherein the predefined objective, negative outcome is the applicant's failure to complete training.

59. (previously presented) The computer-based system of claim 57, wherein the predefined objective, negative outcome is the applicant's receipt of a predefined disciplinary action.

60. (previously presented) The computer-based system of claim 57, wherein the predefined objective, negative outcome is notification of a performance deficiency.

61. (previously presented) The computer-based system of claim 52, wherein the predefined negative outcome is selected from the group consisting of an employment event, a criminal event and a substance event.

62. (currently amended) The computer-based system of claim 52, wherein the responses to the ~~at least one~~ revealed stem question and the hidden branch question [is] are comprised of descriptive information.

63-65. (cancelled)

66. (currently amended) The computer-based system of claim 52, wherein the revealed stem question response cannot be altered by the applicant after ~~completion of the question collection~~ the revealed stem question response is received from the applicant.

67 -72. (cancelled)

73. (new) The method of claim 1, wherein the predefined negative outcome is selected from the group consisting of an employment event, a criminal event and a substance event.



74. (new) The computer readable medium of claim 15, wherein the predefined negative outcome is selected from the group consisting of an employment event, a criminal event and a substance event.

75. (new) The method of claim 1, wherein the revealed stem question response cannot be altered by the applicant after the hidden branch question is revealed to the applicant.

76. (new) The computer readable medium of claim 15, wherein the revealed stem question response cannot be altered by the applicant after the hidden branch question is revealed to the applicant.

77. (new) The computer-based system of claim 52, wherein the revealed stem question response cannot be altered by the applicant after the hidden branch question is revealed to the applicant.